

**FIRST RECORD OF *EUCHRYSOPS CNEJUS* (FABRICIUS)
(LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) ON CHRISTMAS ISLAND,
INDIAN OCEAN**

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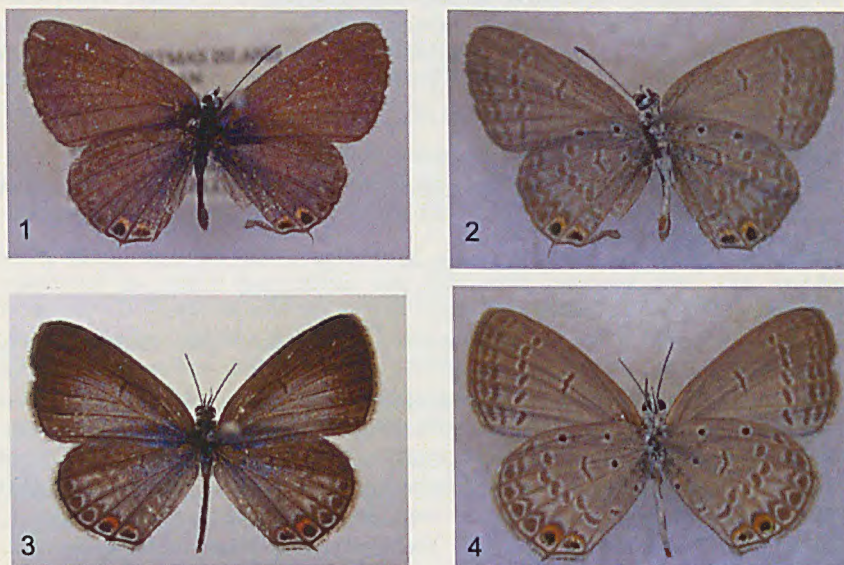
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Abstract

The spotted pea-blue, *Euchryrops cnejus cnejus* (Fabricius), is recorded for the first time from Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean.

Introduction

Christmas Island (10°30'S, 105°35'E) is located in the Indian Ocean, about 360 km south of the Indonesian island of Java, and some 1400 km northwest of Western Australia. It covers an area of approximately 137 km² and much of the island supports tropical rainforest. Its butterfly fauna is incompletely known, the first specimens being collected there by officers of HMS *Flying Fish* (Butler 1887). Since then, a number of lepidopterists have visited the island, progressively adding to the list of known species. Moulds and Lachlan (1987) summarised the history of collections reported from Christmas Island up to that time and added seven more species to the list. The most recent additions are *Papilio memnon* L. (Braby 2000, Moulds and Humphrey 2000) and *Appias olferna* Swinhoe (Lambkin and Knight 2004).



Figs 1-4. *Euchryrops cnejus cnejus* from Christmas Island. (1-2) male upper and underside; (3-4) female upper and underside.

In October–November 2004, one of us (DA) visited the island and made opportunistic collections of butterflies. Among the specimens collected were a male and a female *Euchrysops cnejus* (Fabricius), a species not previously known from the island. These two specimens were flying with a number of *Zizina otis* (Fabricius) around small black-flowered peas growing at a disturbed roadside site. This brings the total number of butterfly species known from Christmas Island to 24.

Euchrysops cnejus cnejus (Fabricius)

Material examined. CHRISTMAS ISLAND: 1♂, 1♀, 4.xi.2004, D. Algar (in WA Dept. of Conservation and Land Management [CALM] Lepidoptera collection).

Comments. The above specimens (Figs 1–4) are relatively small (wingspan of male 25.5 mm, of female 26.0 mm) but the hindwing underside markings are unmistakable. Smaller and lighter in colour than *E. c. cnidus* Waterhouse & Lyell from the Kimberley region of northwestern Australia, they more closely resemble *E. c. cnejus*, a subspecies which occurs widely in Indonesia, and we tentatively include these specimens with the latter subspecies.

The status of *E. cnejus* on Christmas Island is uncertain. It might be a recent arrival but, given that the collecting effort in the past has not been great, and sporadic seasonally, it could well have been overlooked. The fact that the two collected specimens were active around a black-flowered pea strongly suggests that this is its larval food plant. In Australia, *E. c. cnidus* food plants are all members of the pea family Fabaceae (Braby 2000). Indeed, four of the lycaenid butterflies previously recorded from Christmas I., *Prosotas dubiosa* (Semper), *Catochrysops panormus* (C. Felder), *Lampides boeticus* (L.) and *Zizina otis*, also utilise food plants in this family (Braby 2000, 2004).

Acknowledgements

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